REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant thanks Examiner for the detailed Office Action dated February 9, 2006. In response to the issues raised, the Applicant offers the following submissions and amendments.

Amendments

The amendments to the claims clarify that the invention generates the print data for the inkjet printer to print the visible image depicted in the photograph using the digitally encoded data that is invisibly printed in the photograph. The detailed description is wholly concerned with this capability of the present invention.

Accordingly, the amendments do not add any new matter.

35 U.S.C. §103 - Claims 3, 4 and 6

Claims 3, 4 and 6 stand rejected as obvious in light of US 6,603,864 to Matsunoshita in view of US 6,094,279 to Soscia in further view of US 6,160,642 to Mui. The Applicant disagrees.

As discussed above, Claim 6 has been amended to specify that the invention reproduces a visible image using image data that is digitally encoded into the photograph with invisible ink. The invention scans the invisible ink and decodes the encoded data to generate the print data sent to the ink jet printhead for reproducing the visible image. In this way, any defects from wear and tear, fading from age, or other artifacts in the original photograph will not be perpetuated in the reproduction of the visible image from the inkjet printhead.

Matsunoshita encodes a visible image with data related to copyright ownership details. The digitally encoded information may be in the form of a barcode printed in IR ink, or it may be embedded into the visible image. In either case, the scanner reads the visible image, including any artifacts, and reproduces the visible image together with the artifacts, using a printer. The invisible data related to the copyright owner ID, is dealt with separately. It is read by the additional data recognition unit 12, and then invisibly embedded into the reproduced visible image using the invisible data embedding unit 14 (see Fig. 1). The encoded data is again invisible when embedded in the reproduced image.

Matsunoshita does not suggest an arrangement that allows a photograph to be scanned and reproduced without any 'wear and tear' artifacts that detract from image quality. There is no disclosure of scanning invisible encoded digital data using it to generate print data for printing the visible image. Likewise, Soscia and Mui fail to a system that has these features. As none of cited references print visible images using the invisible data encoded into a photograph, the invention of amended Claim 6 is clearly not obvious.

Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's rejection has been successfully traversed and the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration is courteously solicited.
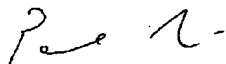
Very respectfully,

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